

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A reconfigurable leg and wheel device, comprising:
an array of components joined in series configurable as i) an articulated leg
5 with the components movable with respect to one another in a walking motion, and
reconfigurable as ii) a wheel with the components forming a circular outer surface and
being rotatable about an axis in a rotational motion.

2. A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the array of components further
10 includes:
a plurality of semi-circular segments combinable to form a substantially
continuous circular surface configured to make rolling contact with a support surface.

3. A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the array of components further
15 includes:
a) an upper leg pivotally coupled at the axis to a body;
b) a lower leg pivotally coupled to the upper leg; and
c) a foot pivotally coupled to the lower leg.

- 20 4. A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the array of components includes:
a) at least two leg segments having semi-circular portions; and
b) at least one intermediate leg segment interconnecting the at least two leg
segments.

- 25 5. A device in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:
at least one actuator, coupled between at least two of the components, to
articulately move the components with respect to each other in the walking motion,
and to reconfigure the components as the wheel.

- 30 6. A device in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:
a circular cap, disposable over the components when reconfigured as the
wheel.

7. A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein one of the components is coupled to the axis and remaining components extend sequentially around the axis when reconfigured as the wheel.

5 8. A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein at least one of the components extends transversely to the wheel when the components are reconfigured as the wheel.

9. A combined and transformable wheel and leg device, comprising:

a) a plurality of leg segments pivotally joined in series;

10 b) the leg segments including a plurality of semi-circular portions; and

c) the leg segments defining at least two configurations, including:

i) a leg configuration in which the leg segments are movable with respect to one another; and

15 ii) a wheel configuration in which the leg segments are rigidly affixed with respect to one another, and the semi-circular portions are combined to form a substantial circular outer surface, and being rotatable about an axis in a rotational motion.

20 10. A device in accordance with claim 9, wherein the plurality of leg segments further includes:

a) an upper leg pivotally coupled at the axis to a body;

b) a lower leg pivotally coupled to the upper leg; and

c) a foot pivotally coupled to the lower leg.

25 11. A device in accordance with claim 9, wherein the leg segments include:

a) at least two leg segments having semi-circular portions; and

b) at least one intermediate leg segment interconnecting the at least two leg segments.

30 12. A device in accordance with claim 9, further comprising:

at least one actuator, coupled between at least two leg segments, to move the leg segments with respect to each other in the leg configuration.

13. A device in accordance with claim 9, further comprising:

a circular cap, disposable over the leg segments in the wheel configuration.

14. A device in accordance with claim 9, wherein one of the leg segments is coupled to the axis and remaining leg segments extend sequentially around an axis in the wheel configuration.

15. A device in accordance with claim 9, wherein at least one of the leg segments extends transversely to one of the other leg segments in the wheel configuration.

16. A combined and transformable wheel and leg device, comprising:

a) an array of leg segments pivotally joined in series, including at least:

i) an upper leg pivotally coupled at an axis to a body; and

ii) a lower leg pivotally coupled to the upper leg;

b) a plurality of semi-circular portions, associated with at least some of the leg segments;

c) the leg segments defining at least two configurations, including:

i) a leg configuration in which the leg segments are movable with respect to one another; and

ii) a wheel configuration in which the leg segments are rigidly affixed with respect to one another, and the semi-circular portions are combined to form a substantial circular outer surface, and being rotatable about an axis in a rotational motion.

d) actuators, coupled between adjacent leg segments, to move the leg segments with respect to each other in the walking configuration.

17. A device in accordance with claim 16, wherein the plurality of leg segments further includes a foot pivotally coupled to the lower leg.

18. A device in accordance with claim 16, wherein the plurality of leg segments further includes at least one intermediate leg segment interconnecting the upper and lower legs.

19. A device in accordance with claim 16, further comprising:

a circular cap, disposable over the leg segments in the wheel configuration.

20. A device in accordance with claim 16, wherein remaining leg segments extend from the upper leg sequentially around an axis in the wheel configuration.

5 21. A device in accordance with claim 16, wherein at least one of the leg segments extends transversely to one of the other leg segments in the wheel configuration.

22. A robotic transportation system, comprising:

a) a body with a motor;

10 b) a plurality of combined and transformable wheel and leg devices, operatively coupled to the body, each including:

i) a plurality of leg segments pivotally joined in series;

ii) the leg segments including a plurality of semi-circular portions; and

iii) the leg segments defining at least two configurations, including:

15 a leg configuration in which the leg segments are movable with respect to one another; and

 a wheel configuration in which the leg segments are rigidly affixed with respect to one another, and the semi-circular portions are combined to form a substantial circular outer surface, and being
20 rotatable about an axis in a rotational motion.